

SUGAR IS KING DOWN IN CUBA

Mr. Carpenter Describes the Big Plantations, Worth Millions of Dollars.

HOLDINGS OF AMERICANS

World's Biggest Sugar Mill, Which Boston Syndicate is Building.

By Frank G. Carpenter.

(Special Correspondence of The Times-Dispatch.)
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MATANZAS, CUBA, July 29.—Come with me and take a peep into Uncle Sam's sugar bowl. About half of all our sugar comes from this island. We paid Cuba forty-two million dollars for short sweetening last year, and we shall pay more in 1905, as the prices are higher. Cuba produces about half of all the cane sugar made upon earth, and she has some of the biggest sugar plantations. For the past two weeks I have been traveling through the interior and have had a chance to get an idea of this great industry.

Cuba's Sugar Plantations.

Cuba has several hundred million dollars invested in sugar plantations. She has in the neighborhood of two hundred which are now in active operation, and along the line of the Cuba Railroad the forests are being cleared and cane set

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another 125,000 bags. Matanzas has some of the best sugar territory, but its lands have been worked for generations and may be surpassed by the new estates now being cut out of the woods. The total output of these provinces will be in the neighborhood of 3,000,000 bags, or in round numbers, something like 900,000,000 pounds of sugar.

Santa Clara province, which lies east of Matanzas, has seventy plantations, of which seventeen are American, three British, eighteen Spanish and thirty-two Cuban. Most of these plantations are very large, and some of the largest belong to Americans. The Emilio Terry planta-

tion. A couple of months later the ground was burned over and the cane is now growing among the stumps and logs left from the first time it is ready for cutting the mill will have been completed, and the cane will be carried on little plantation railroads direct from the field. It is the intention to put in about 5,000 acres of cane for that mill alone.

Similar mills will be built at other places along the road, and one especially is soon to be constructed to supply the sugar estates of a Michigan syndicate, which has bought a large tract of land a short distance from Camaguey along the line of the railroad.

As it is now, not half the lands fitted for sugar have been reduced to cultivation, and it has been estimated that the sugar product of Cuba might be quadrupled and not use all the available sugar lands.

What It Costs to Raise Sugar.

Cuba can produce sugar cheaper than any other country. The plantation at Jatebonico, which I referred to, will continue to produce cane for fifteen or twenty years without replanting. There are plantations here which have produced for twenty-five years from one setting out, and it is said that cane has grown forty and even more years on the same ground, being cut off year after year and sprouting up again from the old stalks. No one thinks of replanting cane here for five, ten or fifteen years after the plantation has been first set out, and on this new ground all that is needed is to plant and keep out the weeds, and the crop goes on for years without other cultivation.

In many other countries the cane has to be planted every third year, and I know of no place where it will last as long as in this. I have made some inquiries as to what it costs to produce sugar in Cuba, and the estimates are about a cent or a cent and a quarter a pound. Beet sugar costs in most places two or three cents a pound, and such sugar will have to be sold at three and a half cents a pound to make a fair profit. Now, inasmuch as there is more beet sugar in the world than cane sugar, this means that the price must be fixed



SUGAR PLANTATION.
THE CANE IS CUT OFF CLOSE TO THE GROUND.

out. About Nipe bay, the new harbor at the northeastern end of the island, a syndicate of Boston capitalists has purchased more than a hundred thousand acres of land and is about to build what I am told will be the biggest sugar plantation ever constructed. It will cost in the neighborhood of two million dollars and it will have a capacity of about 3,000 bags of sugar per day. A bag of sugar weighs little more than 500 pounds. It will cost about \$100,000 to build, and it will give you some idea of this mill's capacity. There are at present a number of mills here that are turning out a thousand bags per day, and there are many plantations worth a million dollars and upward. Indeed, a big sugar estate, including its mill, lands and houses, is a two-million-dollar proposition, and the modern sugar mill alone, as it is in Cuba, costs from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000. The machinery of a mill that will make a thousand bags a day will cost half a million dollars, and the buildings, yards and other things two or three hundred thousand dollars more.

Where the Sugar Cane Grows.

Sugar is now being grown in nearly every province of Cuba. About half the land cultivated is devoted to that crop, and there are vast areas which will yield cane yet to be set out. I have before me a list of the working plantations. Beginning at the west is the province of Pinar del Rio, which is noted as having the best tobacco lands upon earth and which produces the famed Havana cigars. It has only seven sugar plantations, and it will make about 150,000 bags of sugar this year. One of its plantations belongs to Americans, four are Cuban, one French and one Spanish. In Havana there are twenty plantations, chiefly owned by Cubans and Spaniards, and in Matanzas, from where this letter is dated, just east of Havana, there are fifty-two plantations, of which six belong to Americans. One of the American companies actually produces 60,000 bags, another 80,000, and

tion, which is Cuban-American, will produce 210,000 bags this year. The Colonial Sugar Company will produce 175,000 bags, and there are several other American estates which will yield from 30,000 to 150,000 bags each. In the eastern end of the island there are other American plantations, and along the northern coast are the Boston Central Estate, belonging to the United Fruit Company, which will have an output of 170,000 bags, and the Chaparral estate, which will turn out 250,000 bags.

In the central province of Puerto Principe there are only four sugar plantations now opened, but one of these belongs to an American, and it will produce all told about 27,000,000 pounds of sugar this year. There are altogether more than \$25,000,000 of American money invested in sugar mills and working cane lands in Cuba, and this is to-day probably yielding a bigger profit than any American money abroad.

Cuba's New Lands.

The sugar which we now get from Cuba comes from old plantations, and the greater part of it is from Santa Clara, Matanzas and Havana. The increase in the crop of the future will come from the eastern part of the island, which has been opened up by the Cuba Railroad, built from Santa Clara to Santiago by Sir William Van Horn, and running along Cuba's backbone. This country is now covered with forest. One rides for miles through nothing but woods, woods, woods, but the woods cover land as rich if not richer than any now devoted to sugar, and land which has the virtue of never having been farmed.

In going over the road I saw a number of places where new sugar plantations were being cut out of the woods. The largest is at Jatebonico, where something like 3,000 acres have been cleared and planted in cane, and where a sugar mill is now building. A few months ago this was nothing but forest. The Cuba Company put in its men and cut down the

by the former, and that it cannot be less than the amount above mentioned. At that rate Cuba can make sugar and pay dividends on its plantations. At the present prices it is receiving more than ever before. The crop for 1905 will be worth thirty or forty million dollars more than ordinary, and as a consequence the sugar industry is booming and there is likely to be an overproduction. The chief trouble here is the lack of labor. This year they have not had enough men to harvest the crop, and in some places it has rotted on the ground.

Labor on the Plantations.

The most of the labor on the sugar estates is done by Cubans and Spaniards. The Spaniards make excellent workmen, and a considerable immigration is now coming in from the Canary Islands and the northern part of the Spanish Peninsula. These men are thrifty and industrious, and Cuba is doing all she can to encourage their coming.

Wages are good. About Havana they are a dollar a day and \$15 and upward a month, with house rent, and sometimes with a certain amount of food. On many of the new plantations the men work at piecework or by contract. A man will keep so many acres clear at so much per month per acre, and they will be paid by the day for cutting cane or other work. In addition, I know of one plantation where the men make \$30 or \$40 a month in this way, and the plantation is one of the best kept on the island.

Plantation Stores.

Every one of these big sugar estates is a little community of its own. It requires the labor of from 1,000 to 3,000 men or more. This means two or three thousand families, or a population, all told, of about 10,000 souls. In the ordinary life about the mill or scattered in little settlements here and there over the estate. Every plantation has one or more stores, and, as a rule, the workmen are in debt to the stores. Advancements are common, and there is scarcely a man who is not more or less behind.

In talking with Mr. H. Dumois, who for years was at the head of the United Fruit Company estate at Banes, he told me that the plantation stores there were profitable about \$35,000 per year. In such stores the prices are as low as those in the neighboring towns, but the town stores require cash, while at the company stores credit is freely given. Indeed, this plantation store business is one of the important departments of the sugar estates. I know some of the men here who have several plantations who have big incomes from their stores alone. There is one old Spaniard at Cienfuegos who owns a half dozen plantations. He is one of the richest men on the island. He buys his goods wholesale and distributes and distributes them to his various stores, where they are sold at a large profit. These stores have a variety of goods demanded by the Cuban peasant—from face powder and ribbons to gaudy millinery, and from ordinary necessities to fancy saddles, moccasins, hardware, wines, and, in short, everything that you will find in a country store of the United States.

Sugar Railroads.

Most of the sugar estates bring their cane from the fields to the factories on railroads. In passing through the sugar country one sees cars loaded with cane standing at every depot. It has been brought in from the smaller plantations to be shipped over the trunk line to the mills. The plantation railroads bring the cane from the fields to the mills, from fifteen to thirty miles of such roads being required for one plantation. The United Fruit Company, for instance, has twenty-nine miles of such road at Banes, and the Tacayo estate, adjoining it, has twelve miles of track which are connected with the lines of the United Fruit Company. There are in Cuba altogether more than eight hundred miles of railroad track on the sugar

THALHIMER'S.

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A CLEAN-UP SALE

Prices At Their Lowest Here To-morrow! The Way We Smash Selling Records Will Be a Revelation to Bargain Hunters. Just Read the News!

Ladies' Department

(SECOND FLOOR.)

Odds and Ends in Ladies' Gowns.

Fifteen styles in High Neck, V-Neck and Slipovers, made of Nainsook and Cambric:

\$2.25 values at.....\$1.50
\$1.98 values at.....\$1.00
\$1.00 values at.....75c
75c values at.....50c

Colored Underskirts.

To close out for the season, we offer some good inducements in Gingham and Satteen Skirts at prices from 48c to\$3.00

Corset Covers,

made of Nainsook, trimmed in Val. and Torchon laces, full blouses, prices ranging from 13c to.....\$2.00

Odds and Ends In

Ladies' Wash Suits,Coats and Skirts

This sale comprises some seasonable merchandise in small lots, regardless of cost. We quote a few items:

Two Ladies' Pongee Coats, 30-inch length, fitted backs, were \$12.50 and \$15.00, now\$5.00

Six White Cannon Cloth Skirts, kilted effects, were \$1.98 and \$2.48, now\$1.48

Twelve Taffeta Silk Shirtwaists, plain taffeta and pin stripes, were \$12.50 and \$15.00, now.....\$7.50

Two dozen Shirtwaist Suits, in white lawn, linen and madras, were \$5.00, \$8.48 and \$10.00, now \$1.48, \$2.48 and\$3.48

Prices Dropped Again. Real Slaughter Begins To-morrow

Embroidery---Clean-Up Sale

Thousands of Yards to Go so Cheap You Cannot Resist Buying.

Beautiful Swiss Insertings, former prices 25c and 50c, now, yard, 10c and15c
Beautiful Swiss Edges, former prices 30c and 40c, special, yard, 5c and25c
Beautiful Cambric Edges, former prices 15c, now, yard.....10c

Sell Out the Waists

China Silk Waists.

China Silk Waists, front of tucks and fagotting, tucked back, good \$2.50 values, at, each\$1.50
China Silk Waists, trimmed with Val. lace insertings and tucks, others silk embroidered in pretty designs, \$3.98 values, at, each, \$2.98
China Silk Waists, elaborately trimmed in Val. lace, hemstitching and shirring between, open front or back, \$5.00 and \$5.98 values, your choice at, each\$3.98
Dainty Lingerie Waists, best grade of China silk, Val. lace and embroidery trimming, open front and back, \$6.48 and \$7.48 values, at, each\$5.00

Laces, Laces, for Everybody

35c and 40c qualities, in Point de Paris Edges and Insertings, at, yard, 5c, 8c, 10c and12 1-2c
12 1-2c and 15c Torchon Laces reduced to, yard, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c and 6c
18c, 20c, 25c and 30c Val. Laces, in edges and insertings, now, yard, 5c, 8c, 10c, 12 1-2c and15c
\$1.25 and \$1.50 All-over Laces, to go at, yard, 75c and.....\$1.00

Wash Fabrics

Never before have we offered you such values.

All small lots of Wash Goods selling at various higher prices will be displayed for quick selling to-morrow. The best bargains of the season are included in this lot—altogether there are several thousand yards used so much this season for cool summer dresses and children's apparel.

100 pieces 6 1-4c Fine Batiste and Lawns, a handsome line of patterns and styles; special, yard3 8-4c
2,000 yards of new 10c Lawns and Dimities reduced to, yard, 6 1-4c
This is positively the most beautiful lot of wash fabrics ever offered for nearly half their former price.

12 1-2c and 15c Lawns and Fancy Corded Swiss reduced to, yard8 1-4c
Ridiculously low priced are these goods, and every yard in the store should go before closing hour.

Special lot, consisting of Fancy Cotton Voiles, Silk Mulls, Batiste and Eolennies, that sold for 25c per yard, to close out.....12 1-2c
Ample Silk Mulls, in white grounds, with large floral effects; special reduction from 50c to, per yard25c
Another lot of those nice yard-wide Percales at 8 1-4c; regular price 12 1-2c.

Splendid line of Black and White and Colored Duck at, per yard, 10c and12 1-2c
New lot of Apron Ginghams, good quality, at, per yard.....5c
A fine line of best quality Light Prints, only, per yard.....5c

Ladies' Hand Bags, Purses, Satchels

In this department all Leather Goods have been reduced. Below we quote the markdowns:

Beautiful Patent Leather Hand Bags, extra value, at.....50c
Fine Fancy Satchels, worth \$1.50, in tan, red, brown and blue to go at15c
Extra Fine Envelope Bags, former value \$1.50, to go at.....\$1.00
Fine Silk Lined Satchels, with card case and purse, were \$2.25 and \$2.50, to go at\$1.50
Our entire line of higher priced bags to be sold at and below cost.

LADIES' BELTS—All Latest Styles.

Fine Leather Belts, in newest designs and shades, this sale at.....25c
The Beautiful "Howard" Belt, that fits the shape, in all colors, at.....50c
All Silk Belts and Girdles at bottom prices to close them out.

Gentlemen's Furnishings

Some Good Things Always to Be Found in This Department.

These to be sold to-morrow represent better values than anything you ever before heard of:

Fine 60c Woven Madras Negligee Shirts, this sale at.....48c
Plaid Bosom Shirts, in neat effects, extra value, at.....48c
The "New Columbia" Shirts, all the newest patterns, at.....98c
Men's 10c Silk Embroidered Socks, while they last at.....12 1-2c
Men's 48c Black Lace Socks, this sale at.....25c
Men's All Pure Linen Handkerchiefs, worth 15c, this sale at.....10c

Boys' Department

Boys' 25c Percale Waists, with band, this sale at.....21c
50c Mother's Friend Waists, in every style, to go at.....39c
\$1.00 Imported Fancy Madras Blouses, to go at.....75c
White Madras Blouses, in beautiful patterns, extra values, at.....48c
Fancy Woven Madras Blouses, sizes from 7 to 14, to go at.....48c

Domestic Bargains

One lot of Solid Blue Percales, worth 12 1-2c, now, per yard.....6 1-4c
4-4 Percales and Madras, worth 12 1-2c, now, per yard.....8 1-4c
One lot of Indigo Blue Prints, reduced to.....5c
One lot of 4-4 Striped Linen, suitable for furniture coverings, reduced to.....10 2-3c
A fine line of Silkline for Curtains and Mantel Draperies, worth 16 2-3c, to go at10c

Carpets, Carpets!

Carpet prices made very low to close them out regardless of cost.

Choice of any of our Ingrain Carpets, worth 60c, 75c and 85c, per yard, to clean up, at, per yard.....50c

NOTICE—We will make them up for you now and hold them till called for.

plantations alone, and this has a value of more than eleven million dollars. The most of these roads are equipped with rolling stock from the United States. They use Baldwin locomotives largely, and some of them buy their steel rails of Krupp.

Electric Roads and Alcohol Automobiles.

So far the sugar estates have but few electric railroads, and Cuba has no electric railroad system such as is fast grid-ironing the United States. This would seem to me one of the possibilities of the future. Each big plantation, with its population of several thousand, will eventually have its railway connection with its neighbors, and the mills will carry sugar cane to the mills as well as other freight and passengers. Many of the sugar planters are studying cheap railroad transportation. They are considering the use of automobile engines made after the present gasoline pattern, operated with alcohol as fuel. Alcohol here is much cheaper than gasoline. Indeed, it is a by-product of the sugar mills, being made at so little cost that it is sold in hundred gallon casks at twelve cents per gallon. It has, it is said, about ninety per cent. of the heat generating power of commercial gasoline, and it can be used at every depot. It has been brought in from the smaller plantations to be shipped over the trunk line to the mills. The plantation railroads bring the cane from the fields to the mills, from fifteen to thirty miles of such roads being required for one plantation. The United Fruit Company, for instance, has twenty-nine miles of such road at Banes, and the Tacayo estate, adjoining it, has twelve miles of track which are connected with the lines of the United Fruit Company. There are in Cuba altogether more than eight hundred miles of railroad track on the sugar

farmers to know that much of the sugar cane here is raised without plowing. In the new plantations, which are set out in the woods, no plows can be used on account of the logs and stumps. None is necessary, however. After the wood has been burned the land is perfectly clean. The men then dig holes at intervals along the rows and put in sections of sugar cane a few inches long and cover them up. In a few days the cane begins to sprout at the knots, and a day or so later the blades, which are much like those of corn or grass, come through the ground. A young cane field looks much like a corn field. The crop grows rapidly, and all that is necessary is to keep down the weeds. It sprouts up in bunches of several stalks to a bunch.

The cane is ready for cutting in eighteen months, after which it can be cut every year. It is cut close to the ground, the tops trimmed and the leaves stripped off. It is then loaded on the great ox carts, which carry it to the railroad. On the best plantations the carts and oxen are loaded and unloaded by machinery, steam cranes being sometimes used for this purpose.

The World's Sugar Crop.

Cuba has produced eleven or twelve hundred thousand tons of sugar this year. This is about one-tenth of the world's total sugar product, and fully one-fourth of the cane sugar product. Beet sugar leads the cane sugar in quantity by more than one million tons. The world's product from beets amounts altogether to five or six million tons, whereas the cane sugar crop is usually not more than four millions. Most of our best sugar

comes from Europe, the United States producing only about 200,000 tons.

The great cane sugar countries are Cuba and Java and the Sandwich Islands. Several hundred thousand tons of cane sugar are raised in Louisiana, 85,000 tons in Porto Rico and 80,000 tons in the Philippine Islands. Including our beet product, we raise altogether just about one million tons of sugar, which is less than two-fifths of what we consume, the balance being imported.

Uncle Sam's Sweet Tooth.

The United States has, in fact, a sweeter tooth than any other nation except England. We eat on the average more than seventy pounds a year for every man, woman and child in the country, while

Europe averages only a little more than twenty-seven pounds. The English sugar consumption is ninety-one pounds per capita. That of the Swiss is sixty pounds of the Danes fifty-four, and of all the other nations much less. The Germans each cut thirty-four pounds of sugar every year, the Dutch thirty-two, the Greeks and Bulgarians seven, and the Turks, although notably fond of candy, only eight pounds. We eat altogether about five billion pounds of sugar annually, or a pound and a half per week for every man, woman and child in the country. We consume three times as much now per capita as we did when Andrew Jackson was President, and we are eating more and more from year to year. (Copyright, 1905, by Frank G. Carpenter.)



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